Issue 31 May 2003

Leys News

What are these four up to? See page 3.

What's on at the Community Centre? See centre pages.

Red Nose Day at Windale School. See page 3.

Going, going, gone. Old oak comes down. Page 11.

ALL HERE FOR AGNES: Workers, volunteers and friends of the Blackbird Leys Advice Centre turned out in early April to witness the unveiling of the sign bearing the new name of the centre - the Agnes Smith Advice Centre. Agnes, who sadly died towards the end of last year, was the centre's co-ordinator and inspirational force. She was involved with the centre for 12 years and helped many people realize their full potential. Her daughter Kirsty performed the ceremony. The sign was generously paid for by the Blackbird Leys Tenants Forum. Full contact details and more information on page 7.

THE FREE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER FOR ALL OF THE LEYS

Leys News

Leys News Ltd it is a not-for-profit business dedicated to providing news and information to the whole community

Leys News is not affiliated to any political party

Leys News operates an equal opportunities policy and encourages any resident to get involved in its work

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Who's who?

Board of Directors
Molly Florey - *Chair,* Penny Wood - *Secretary*, Tom Golcher, Stuart Mabbutt, Colin Minto, Roy Simmonds, Jasper Smith, Wendy Spray and Peter Stevenson

Editorial committee this issue
Al Cane, Molly Florey, Patsy Spencer, Jo Stannard, Sasha Vanderhyde, Becky Willis and Roy Simmonds

Editor and development worker: **Al Cane**
(Etain O'Carroll from May onwards)
Admin and production support: **Jo Stannard**

Distribution co-ordinator: **Ian Fieldwick**

Website development: **Julia Sutton**

Volunteers and contributors: **Julian Dourado, Stuart Mabbutt, Patsy Spencer and Roy Simmonds**

Goodbye for now

It's with a mixture of feelings that I am vacating the editor's hot seat after more than four years. Sad to be moving on from working on the Leys after so much positive expeirience, but happy to know that I'm leaving the paper in a reasonable state, having developed the project as far as I can. When I started in 1999 the company had no office and I was working from home on my own equipment, using my own camera. Now ***Leys News*** has an office, computer equipment, its own camera and more than one member of staff. Thanks to all the people who have helped and supported me in this time, especially the directors, the editorial committee and volunteers. I wish the paper and especially Jo and Etain well and all success in the future. Cheers for now.
Al Cane.

Leys News Limited is pleased to announce the appointment of Etain O'Carroll (pictured left) as its new editor. She recently moved to Oxford from Ireland and comes with a wealth of experience in writing and photography. Etain will be starting her part-time position in May. Please bear with us at this transitional time.

Also moving on...

Becky Willis (community development worker for the Blackbird Leys Housing Consortium) is moving on to become the co-ordinator of the East Oxford Healthy Living Initiative, based at the top of Cowley Road. She said ***"The Leys is a unique community and I feel privileged to have worked with so many wonderful people and groups here. The hardest thing about this job is finding time to respond to all the exciting ideas thrown up by residents and community groups. I very much hope to stay in touch with some of the good friends and colleagues I've made over the last few years. My new job covers the Leys as well as East Oxford, so I hope I'll still have plenty of reasons to cross the ring road."***
Also leaving present their jobs shortly are Nik Earl, the Active Communities manager based at the Community Centre who is moving to Luton to take up a new post there and Paul Thompson of 'Plug into Music.' ***Leys News*** wishes all three well in their future work and thanks them for their valuable contributions to the Leys.

Angry young people take action

The playground at Kingfisher Green has suffered from another spate of mindless vandalism. Young people living in Jack Argent Close approached *Leys News* to point out broken wooden railings, damaged young trees and dangerous objects lying about, as well as offensive graffiti. Alex Sampson (10) of Jack Argent Close said "To the people who did this, when kids come to use the playground, how would you feel if they injured themselves because you smashed it?"
One local parent also voiced concerns about the playground, Mr Trotter said "I don't want my children playing here anymore. It's not safe." Another local parent said that they take their children down to Gillian's park instead.
A third added that it would be better if the whole playground was replaced with something more suitable for older children.

Alex (second from right) is pictured with Tom, Sam, Laura, Amber and Jake.

Al Change

After almost five years at the helm of Leys News, Al Cane has decided it's time to jump ship! Al did everything - journalism, photography, marketing, design… There can't be many newspapers where the editor is occasionally also the paperboy! Al seems to know and chat to everyone, valuing their contributions. Despite the pressures he also maintained his sense of humour. Moving on to fresh challenges is part of Al, and we are sure he will make a great success of whatever he does. Everyone involved wants to thank him for his commitment, dedication and sheer hard work, and to wish him the best of luck for the future. Here's what some of them have to say...

"When you go through life you sometimes meet people who have a very positive outlook and somehow it rubs off on you. Al is one such person. Even when Leys News has been struggling and getting the paper out on time has seemed almost impossible, somehow Al's quiet determination made it happen. I have enjoyed many hours talking to him about things as diverse as local groups and music to windy babies with teething problems! Leys News is losing a great asset." ***Cllr Molly Florey***

"Al has done a fantastic job. He has developed Leys News into the successful paper that is the envy of many other communities. He had to convince us that Leys News should have more photos and that and that it didn't have to be printed on bright yellow paper - in fact that it would be more readable if it weren't! When we went to negotiate our partnership with Newsquest Al ensured that Leys News kept its editorial independence. Then he battled with the technology - until all hours of the night. He is leaving a strong Leys News. We owe him a great debt." ***Wendy Spray, Oxford Citizens Housing Association***

"I started working with Al when I volunteered, just after Leys News moved into its Kingfisher Green Office. It was a great introduction to the world of work for me and Al was very supportive and encouraging. He has inspired me throughout my new working life, as he is honest, positive and fun to be around. Thank you Al. " ***Sasha Vanderhyde, Blitz project***

Next *Leys Bulletin* out in late May. Copy deadline: Wed 21 May

***Leys News 32* out in early July. Copy & ad deadline: Mon 2 June**

Correction
In issue 30 we printed the wrong web address of the local Brownies. Apologies to them and to webweaver Anita Hasoon. The correct address is ***www.geocities.com/blackbirdleysbrownies***

Wardens make a difference

LOOK OUT: Wardens Jane Kerry, Terry Kirby, Malcolm Taylor and Kevin Gosling on the case, showing what's lying around by the brook at the back of Angelica Close and Andromeda Place.

Street wardens are becoming a familiar site on the streets of Blackbird Leys and Northfield Brook. Since the scheme was launched in March they have made themselves known to all and sundry. They found an abandoned safe in Gillian's Park, have identified and organised the towing away of several abandoned cars and have done some clearing work around the brook to make it look like the attractive place that it is. Members of the public have been approaching them to tell them about specific issues like needles in the park.

According to Steve Kilsby, the person at the City Council responsible for the scheme "The very high profile and effective work of the street wardens is already making a great difference to communities in Blackbird Leys and Northfield Brook, as their successes are demonstrating. I would like to thank the local communities who have welcomed the Wardens so well, and who clearly appreciate the benefits the scheme is bringing to them."

The wardens, who also operate in Littlemore and Rose Hill have recently established a shift pattern, so that with the evenings getting lighter they will be a presence on the streets until later in the day. Their main functions are to help improve the environment, deter crime and anti social behaviour and to work with vulnerable groups.

To get in touch with your local wardens call 401456.

Red Nose roundup

Wild haired children and staff at Windale School put on a variety afternoon of song, dance and jokes for Red Nose Day back on March 14. Children paid 50p each to come in dressed up for the day. They collected a huge total of £385 in total, including £50 raised by the nursery's cake stall. Congratulations and well done to all who took part, it was

Over at the youth centre young people organised their own events and raised cloe to £130 for Red Nose Day. Thanks to everyone for their support.

Adult learners week

This year it's from12 to 16 May. Watch out for computer and exercise sessions organised by Age Concen Oxfordshire.

Contact Richard Wales at Age Concern on 717614 to get the info.

BLITZ entends itself

Local MP Andrew Smith was invited to the Blitz IT Hub at the Community Centre in early April to present NIAS certificates to the first students from Blitz to receive them. They all successfully completed a six week beginning word processing course. Tutor Joanna Pavelin is pictured with Jackie Sharp, Nicola Young, Andrew Smith, Mike Pierce and Blitz IT Hub centre manager Mike Kelly. Two of the students are now doing family history research. (Tuesdays 7-9pm)

Other BLITZ news

ACCAN, the African Caribbean Community Action Network, one of BLITZ's 18 partners has opened its internet cafe at the East Oxford Sports hall in Collins Street (behind Tesco's)
Drop in times are
Monday 10 to 12 and 6 to 9pm, (except for Bank holidays and the last Monday in the month when its closed).
Tuesday 6- 9pm
Wednesday 10 - 12 and 6 to 9pm
Thursday closed
Friday 7 - 9pm
Saturday 7 - 9pm
Sunday 2 - 7pm

Call ACCAN on 467050 to find out more.

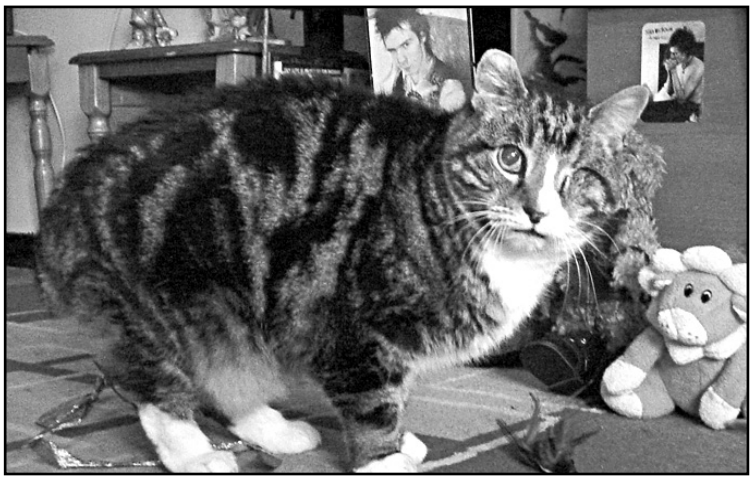
IT Hub - Blackbird Leys Community Centre
Drop in sessions All info on 714492.
Monday 9.30 - 4.30, Tuesday 9.30 - 7, Wednesday 12.30 - 4.30, Thursday 9.30 - 6, Friday 9.30 - 4.30, Saturday 9.30 - 1.30.
1 to 1 slots with volunteer tutor Mon & Tues
Family History Course Tuesday 7 - 9pm
Computers for the terrified Wed 9.30 - 12.30
Homework club Wednesday 4 - 6.30pm
Word processing Wednesday 7 - 9pm
Web design Thursday 6 - 8pm
Parents internet group Friday 10-12noon
Barn Youth internet café Monday 4 - 6pm
ClockHouse Computing for over 50s.
Cuddesdon Corner Drop in Thursday 10 - 2
Dovecote Internet drop in for parents
Contact Carol on 712299
LRA Internet coffee mornings 26 Kingfisher Green Tuesday 9.30 - 12.30

Thinking guides

Local Rainbows, Brownies and Guides recently went on a Thinking Day parade through Blackbird Leys. The Guides also doing a community service project which include making guide books to Blackbird Leys and addressing the litter problem around the Holy Family Church. They meet at the Church Hall on Friday evenings from 7 to 9pm. Anyone aged 10 to 15 is welcome to attend. Contact Heather Retter (unit Guider) or Laura Pill (assistant Guider) on 455970.

Dennis has his eye on you!

This is Dennis who lives with Mackie in Little Bury. Dennis is eleven and Mackie got him from the Cats Protection League about a year and a half ago, although they weren't able to tell her much about his background Mackie guesses he'd had a tough life before that. Dennis doesn't like being left on his own for too long. Mackie says Dennis is very affectionate and full of character, he's lovely although he can be a bit temperamental, and he likes to wake her up at 4 am for his breakfast by jumping on her head. Dennis likes Chinese food - his favourite is chicken balls, but surprisingly he won't eat fish. Dennis had to have one eye removed having developed an abscess in it, but having been unsure of himself at first he has grown in confidence. He likes playing with bits of ribbon, and a stick with a feather on the end.



Send us a photo of your pet if you live on the Leys and we may publish it here.

Looking for Betty Parris

Hello,
I am looking for my good friend Betty Parris who moved from the one of the tower blocks in Blackbird Leys to Pegasus Road some years ago. Before I moved to the USA I lived in Oxford on Divinity Road back in the late 70's, early 80's where we were roommates for a time.
I hopefully she will see it and contact me. Any help you can afford would be greatly appreciated. Thank you so much.

Sharon D. Stevens
LS3P ASSOCIATES LTD.
112 S. Tryon Street, Suite 200
Charlotte, NC 28284
Tel: 704.333.6686
Fax: 704.333.2926
www.ls3p.com
Can anyone help Sharon?

Get tuned up

Enthusiastic young musicians are encouraged to apply for a free one week music skills workshop. Building on successful events in previous years the Prince's Trust is putting on the week for aspiring musicians in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. Sound Live is happening in Guildford over a week in mid July and covers guitar, bass, drums and vocals. It's open to 18 to 25 year olds, who are unemployed and not in full time education.

Travel, accommodation and meals are all provided. The six day residential course will involve working with professional musicians in both individual and group workshops as well as working on performing live.

If you are interested please contact Jo Pumphrey at the Prince's Trust as soon as possible on 825998 or email to office.oxford@princes-trust.org.uk

Free video production experience

A video project in east Oxford is looking for up to six unemployed people to join a video production course.

The course starts on Tuesday 13 May and runs on Tuesday and Friday mornings for two months. People can gain an NVQ level 2 in video production and become a member of the national union of students. The subject matter will be transport andconsultation with hard to reach groups in east Oxford andBlackbird Leys .The trainer is Nick Lunch, a participatory video specialist. Potential students should be unemployed.
To get in touch people should contact Andy Davice at East Oxford Action on Oxford 203367 as soon as possible.

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Tue 7.00 - 7.30 pm
Sat 10.30 - 11.30 am

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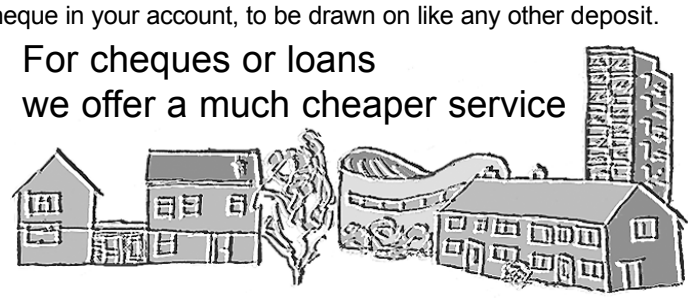
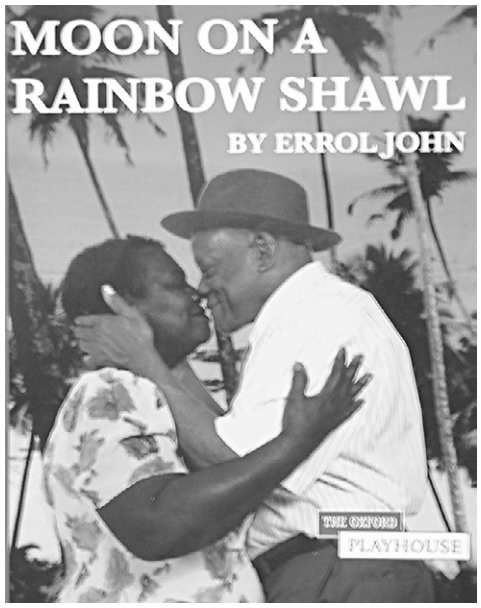


Theatre review

In April's issue we put in a plea for theatre reviewers and a member of our editorial board, Patsy Spencer, came forward to review 'Moon on a rainbow shawl' by Errol John which was performed at the Oxford Playhouse in April. Patsy attended with several young people and their parents from the Blackbird Leys Saturday School, who thoroughly enjoyed the performance.



Set in Trinidad the play is centred around a young man whose dream is to leave his country and travel to Liverpool for a better chance in life.

This was an excellent piece of drama which included some funny moments but also raised diverse issues including immigration, colonialism, sport, education and mixed relationships.

Poverty was at the root of several moral dilemmas that came to the fore in the production. A character called Charlie robbed a local restaurant to pay his daughter's school fees and a young girl choosing to raise her child together with a very old man in preference to bringing him up as a single parent.
I got a real sense of being in the Caribbean brought about by brilliant stage and scene settings. A very engaging play, well worth the visit.

Artweeks

It's here again, Artweeks, Oxfordshire's visual arts festival. Over a thousand artists and crafts people from all over Oxfordshire will be exhibiting. Oxford city week is from Saturday 17 to Sunday 25 May. Artists are opening up their studios and homes, or showing in shops, cafes and public buildings in most parts of the city.

You can get a free booklet listing everything that's on from libraries and many public places in Oxford.

Leys News is disappointed to see that there are no exhibitions locally. The nearest one is at the Ark -T Centre, on Crowell Road, behind Templars Square shopping centre, where a group of artists are showing "innovative two and three dimensional work based around the theme 'On the Margins'". Next year it would be great to see some artists or groups exhibiting in Blackbird Leys in the artweeks guide.

Two people involved in ***Leys News*** are showing however. Support worker Jo Stannard is exhibiting at Magdalen Road Studios in East Oxford, (near the Pegasus Theatre). The artists who work in the building are opening both floors to the public on the two weekends and the Thursday. There are a dozen contemporary artists showing work including sculpture, installation, painting and photography.

Volunteer Julian Dourado - who draws our spot-the-differences amongst other things - is exhibiting his printmaking at 'Far from the Madding Crowd' pub in Friars Entry in the city centre.

Modern Art Oxford continues the Jake and Dinos Chapman exhibition, and has two days of free events for children. A mixed-media sculpture workshop on 17th May for 8 to 12 year olds for which places need to be booked on 813802, and a family day on Sunday 18th May where children and accompanying adults can turn up and take part in activities exploring the exhibition.

Health Centre news

Building should begin on the Dunnock Way site next to the Spar shop in March or April 2004 and the health centre is expected to open within a year after that.
It will include a GP practice, probably a pharmacy, community nursing including podiatry, a dental surgery, and possibly mental health resources and social services.
Eight companies tendered for the work 7 were interviewed, of which 3 are putting plans together over the next three months. One of them will be selected at the end of July.
There are also firm plans to build a neighbourhood nursery on the same site.
Older residents of Blackbird Leys have expressed concerns about the disappearance of the existing centre when the new one opens.
Leys News will endeavour to keep readers informed of developments.

Job search help

Would you like help searching for a new job? Are you unsure which type of job to apply for? Or would you like help with CV's, application forms and interview skills? Would you would like to gain some new skills in preparation for returning to work some time in the future?
Melodie, your local Adult Information and Advice Worker for Employment, Education and Training can give you free and confidential help with any of these. Contact Melodie at the Leys Linx Centre on Tuesdays between 12 and 4pm.
Phone 402070.

Pension advice

The Oxfordshire Pension Service has started running pension advice surgeries at Leys Linx Centre every other Monday between 9.30am and 12.30pm. The service is part of the Department for Work and Pensions. It's there to provide information about state benefits for pension age customers and for those approaching pension age.

More information is available on 443250.

Wordsearch competition

find the following 11 words hidden in the box.
Some are written backwards and some run diagonally.
Send your entry into Leys News (address on page 2) by May 21.
Correct entries will be drawn from a hat and the lucky winner will receive £10.

Congratulations to Mrs Phyllis Lindsay of Kestrel Crescent who won last issue's 'Spot the Difference' competition.

CLOCKHOUSE
CUDDESDONCORNER
DENNIS
KINGFISHERGREEN
LEYSLINX
LEYSNEWS
NASHSBAKERY
OLDOAKTREE
PEGASUSROAD
SKATERHOCKEY
WINDALEAVENUE

N	S	P	J	F	J	K	S	N	J	P	O	A	E	K
A	W	J	E	Z	C	I	J	N	O	L	I	E	I	W
S	E	T	T	G	N	M	U	F	D	C	U	N	K	C
H	N	D	Z	N	A	A	X	O	T	N	G	A	L	V
S	S	B	E	P	X	S	A	N	E	F	Q	Q	H	W
B	Y	D	K	J	L	K	U	V	I	Y	G	A	B	P
A	E	W	S	P	T	H	A	S	E	L	P	M	C	M
K	L	B	M	R	N	E	H	I	R	H	S	P	X	D
E	G	X	E	T	L	E	R	Q	B	O	M	Y	A	O
R	I	E	S	A	R	N	T	R	D	M	A	Q	E	G
Y	C	P	D	G	H	D	V	K	G	A	U	D	M	L
R	E	N	R	O	C	N	O	D	S	E	D	D	U	C
B	I	E	S	K	A	T	E	R	H	O	C	K	E	Y
W	E	S	U	O	H	K	C	O	L	C	H	A	A	A
N	T	S	U	J	A	G	M	N	E	H	Y	M	I	R

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Oxford OX4 1XS Fax: 727015
Email: srinivsans@btconnect.com

Supported by Jobcentre Plus, European Social Fund, Learn Direct, Abingdon and Witney College.

David Parry - new priest in town

This is the Reverend David Parry, who has been the Anglican priest at Holy Family Church since March. He comes recently from Hemel Hempstead and before that Manchester, but remembers well his two years studying for priesthood at nearby Cuddesdon College. He is joined by his wife Marilyn, who is American and also a priest and director of ordinands at Oxford's Christchurch Cathedral.

They have two grown up children and have settled into Church House on Cuddesdon Way. David has found Blackbird Leys very warm and welcoming and is impressed by the commitment and initiative shown by local community organisations. He is looking forward to meeting and working alongside all kinds of people during his time in Blackbird and Greater Leys.

Holy Family Church news

Up to the end of July all regular weekly services are on Sundays at 10 am. A warm welcome to all especially children.

Some special services coming up -

Sunday 18 May at 6.30 pm
there will be one of our regular healing services. All are welcome. If you are unable to attend, but would like a prayer to be said for you or for a friend just drop the name through the Church Centre letterbox and mark it 'prayer request.'

Sunday 22 June, - a celebration of the 300th anniversary of the birth of John Wesley.

Sunday 13 July at 3.00 pm
Pet service to which pets and their owners are warmly invited.

Roman Catholic Sacred Heart Church

Sawpit Road 779658
Resident priest -
Father Prem Fernando
or contact Father John Hancock in Littlemore on 778454

New on the beat

Two new beat officers have now joined the local team. Pc1698 Morris replaces Pc 918 Terry and Pc 4319 James-Leach has replaced Pc Berry who has gone onto the burglary team in Oxford.

Recently published crime figures show the good news that there's been a 3% reduction in crime in the Blackbird Leys area, as against an Oxford area increase of 3%. The Blackbird and Greater Leys shift also has a detection rate of 54% which is above average for the Oxford area.
The police now have mountain bikes, which enables them to get out and about on the estate easier and to respond more flexibly to situations.

The recent DVLA operation on the Oxford area resulted in 189 vehicles beingclamped for no road tax and we are continuing our fight against drugs on theestates and have several operations that are on going.

Steve Redding - Community Beat Sergeant
Blackbird and Greater Leys
Tel 335114
E-mail
Steve.Redding@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

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WebWise	Dressmaking	Beginner Computing	Popular Biology	Upholstery
Wood Carving	Cookery Workshops	How to Mail merge	Tai Chi	Computer Drop-ins

If you are interested give us a 01865 712094

Local groups get grants

The following groups have recently been awarded grants from the city council's community grants budget.

Blackbird Leys Bowls Club £9,000

The Leys Community Development Initiative £2,500.

Blackbird Leys Pre-School £500

Dovecote Voluntary Parents Committee £7000.

The Leys Lunch Club £700

Leys Youth programme £650

and finally
Leys News £2,500

Advice centre seeks volunteers

The Agnes Smith Advice Centre, formerly the Blackbird Leys Advice Centre at the Top Shops is pleased to announce the recent appointment of Laura Wilson as the new full time deputy manager. The centre is very keen to recruit new volunteers as receptionists, like Filda from Rose Hill who has recently joined. Volunteers can go on to receive full training to become advice workers in their own right. To get in touch drop into the centre anytime in open hours and have a chat with one of the workers or call 770206.

Two PEEP Early Start groups ran at Cuddesdon Corner this spring. One for babies on Wednesday morning and one for 2's and 3's on Saturday morning. There were lots of activities on offer for all to join in with. Families had lots of fun playing, making books, creating stories, singing, and generally relaxing with their children.
There was time to share experiences of being a parent and also exchange ideas about coping with the more difficult things - like living with tantrums!

Each family made a folder about all the things they enjoy doing together and some are going for Open College Network accreditation.

We'll be celebrating with all the other Early Start groups that have run around Oxfordshire at a special event in May.
Both groups are carrying on - the Saturday group is open to children from 0-4 years and their families -

call the PEEP Centre on 395145 for more details.

Scout hut gets a lift

Local scout groups received a boost recently when they took possession of a cheque for £300. The cash will be put towards repair of the scout hut on Sandy Lane. The money was donated by the Blackbird Bonanza and Pathway Project as one of their regular six monthly estate kitty contributions to community projects.

Saturday PEEP group 10 to 12noon Cuddesdon Corner Family Centre

This new group starts on Saturday 10 May and is open to babies, one, two, three and four year olds and their families. It will be a fun session with lots of activities, playing (indoor and out), stories and singing.
Refreshments available for children and adults.
Mums, Dads and all carers welcome!

Dovecote gets a windfall

The Dovecote Voluntary Parents Committee has been awarded a huge £93,000 by the National Lottery Community Fund.
This will secure playshemes and after school clubs for the next three years. Dovecote worker Carol Richards said "This is very good news for the kids, I'm very happy that we can provide good facilities for them."

Areas and Times of PEEP Groups – Summer 2003

AREA	Babies (Age 0-1)	Ones (Age 1)	Twos (Age 2)	Foundation (Age 3 & 4)	Nursery PEEP (Age 3 & 4)
Blackbird Leys	Tue 9:30 Health Ctr Wed 9.45 CC FC	Tue 11:15 Health Ctr	Mon 9:45 HFC Hall Sat 10-12 CC FC	Thur 9:45 HFC Hall	Wed - Orchard Meadow Thur - Pegasus
Greater Leys	Tue 1:30 Clock Hse Thur 1:30 Dovecote	Thur 11:00 Clock Hse	Tue 1:30 Dovecote		Tues - Windale
Rose Hill	Wed 10:30 SS Family Centre	Tue 10:00 RH First Sch	Thur 10:00 RH First School	Mon 1:30 Scout Hut Rosehill	Thurs - Rosehill
Littlemore	Wed 9:45 St N Thur 9:30 PEEP Cabins	Wed 9:30 Peep Cabins Wed 1:30 EASOCEC	Wed 11:15 Peep Cabins	Tue 1:30 LCC Wed 1:30 LCC	Wed - Speedwell Fri - St John Fisher

Clock Hse = Clockhouse HFC Hall = Holy Family Church Hall CC FC = Cuddesdon Corner Family Centre
St N = St Nicholas House EASOCEC = Community Ed Centre, Peers Campus LCC = Littlemore Community Centre

PEEP groups take place during the school terms. Families can join a PEEP group at any point from the birth of their child to when they enter school.
If you would like to join a PEEP group, or just visit with your child, please phone Janet Cross at the PEEP Centre on 395145 and we can arrange a group which would suit you.

Community Centre comes back to life...

SOMETHING HAD TO BE DONE

There's no doubt about it, change had to happen at Blackbird Leys Community Centre.
A community study in 1999 co-ordinated by Ealing Family Housing Association voiced much concern about the management of the centre. Comments included
"***Its being run like a drinking club***"
"***The management committee is a clique***"
"***I feel like an outsider***"
"***It's uncomfortable and unwelcome***" and
"***It's a dangerous place, especially when it's dark***".

Allegations were made of the premises being used for the use and dealing of drugs, with a view that the police were "aware" of the problem. There was a strong view expressed that the City Council "have not had the time or resources to guide it better" and that they should "rip out the committee and staff" and "start again" under "new management".

CHANGE HAS HAPPENED

The City Council did listen. At the beginning of January 2000 the Council stepped in to close down the bar operations and the long process of rejuvenating the centre began. A new manager, Paul Isaacs, with a wealth of experience from managing the Barton Neighbourhood Centre since 1992, was brought in and since December 2000, a three-year business plan has been taking place at the centre and people have already benefited from the significant improvements. The redevelopment works have been driven forwards with support from local councillors and community groups. The works have been funded primarily by the City Council, the Leys Community Development Initiative and by various government sources such as the Single Regeneration Budget and the New Opportunities Fund - a fine example of partnership work.

WHAT'S BEEN ACHIEVED SO FAR

a new **YOUTH WING** at the rear of the building with a large recreational space, arts room and offices for the Area Youth Service and for the CDI.
Ring Katy Hamilton on 772886 or Dolcie Obhiozele on 778250 .

LEYS LINX (formerly known as the 'Shopfront Project') which provides the base for the Blackbird Leys Credit Union and a wide variety of community advice, educational, welfare rights and employment projects.
Ring Enid Foster on 402070 or Jim Hewitt on 718503.

BLITZ (Blackbird Leys Information Technology Zone).
This fantastic UK Online facility provides community access computers connected to the internet through the local broadband network and acts as the hub for other satellite community centres elsewhere on the Leys.
See page3 for current programme or ring Mike Kelly on 714492.

Redecoration of the **COMMUNITY BAR** operated by a locally run community business, CMS Ltd. Joe Obhiozele, the licensee, is providing a great range of new entertainments at weekends. The large hall is available for community group and private hire on Saturday evenings.
Ring Joe Obhiozele on 777162.

Office premises for **HOME-START, OXFORD** a local organisation offering support for families with children five years and under.
Ring Adrian, Lyn or Sue on 779991.

A base for **OCEG**, the Oxford Community Education Group which runs homework clubs, workshops and provides essential educational support to young people, particularly of African-Caribbean origin.
Ring Dolcie Obhiozele on 778250.

A completely refurbished **COMMUNITY KITCHEN** and associated HEALTH PROMOTION ROOM providing two more superb resources via the East Oxford / Blackbird Leys Healthy Living Initiative. Watch out for a wide range of Monday morning, afternoon and evening courses to do with healthy living and food preparation beginning in the next few weeks. ***Ring Kate Dunstan or Becky Willis on 252373 .***

WHAT ELSE IS ON OFFER?

The Community Association has continued to run the successful evening BINGO sessions in addition to the weekly SILVER CIRCLE and GOLDEN CIRCLE groups. ***Ring Val Bazylkiewicz on 435954.***

The Centre is the base for the SRB5 LEYS REGENERATION SCHEME which has brought in a variety of training and capacity building opportunities and administers the popular annual Community Chest grant fund.
Ring Phil Powell on 396392 or Sue Weinstock on 402070.

The Centre is home to the ACTIVE COMMUNITIES and POSITIVE FUTURES projects organising sports and training opportunities for local groups and individuals. ***Ring 401000 for more information.***

The CITY YOUTH SERVICE has its administration base at the Centre so contact them with any of your youth opportunities queries.
Ring Richard Aldridge or Julie Harsant on 712682.

Computer session at the IT Hub part of the Blitz project.

Jim Hewitt and volunteer at Credit Union

Joe Obhiozele from CMS Bar

MEMBERSHIP DETAILS

Why not come along and take a look or better still become a member for only £3 a year. (£1.50 for Senior Citizens and concessions)

For further information please contact
Paul Isaacs (Centre Manager) on 401098 or Val Bazylkiewicz (BBLCA administration) on 435954.

Jo Barrett and Sue Funge from OCEG

fixing up the kitchen

Training session at Home-Start offices

Side of centre housing youth wing

THE FINAL PHASE OF REDEVELOPMENT WORK

By April 2004 the major programme of redevelopments at the Centre should have been completed. The following projects are still to be completed.

Creating a second purpose built community hall with servery.
This area will provide extra space for smaller functions, training courses, meetings, community activities and other related programmes.

Developing a purpose built MUSIC RECORDING STUDIO
This area will replace the existing music room to provide a superb new facility to be accessed by the local community. Much new music equipment has already been purchased and the recent 'Plug into Music' courses funded by the National Youth Foundation have been extremely popular.

Improving the ACCESSIBILITY of the Centre
A comprehensive programme of works will be undertaken to meet Disability Discrimination Act requirements. These works will include improvements to disabled toilets, access ramps and a lift.

Re-opening the SPORTS CHANGING ROOM
Work is currently underway to revamp the changing area so that it can be used by local clubs and recreational groups;

Continued EXTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS
New signage, lighting, undergrowth clearance and regular litter picking has gradually made the centre a more welcoming place. A programme of murals, repainting and improvements to the car parking area will continue over the next 12 months.

These new exciting developments at the Blackbird Leys Youth and Community Centre emphasise the commitment that Oxford City Council, working alongside committed local partners, have in building up community facilities dedicated to life long learning and serving the whole community of Blackbird Leys.

CMS Bar
Blackbird Leys Community Centre
Function hall
open every day of the week
Facilities include:
Big screen TV with Sky entertainment
Football and other live sports
The bar is family friendly and holds family discos
Next family discos on
Bank holiday Mondays May 5 and 26
Watch out for David Rodigan on 12 July
- make it a date for your diary, as this successful Oxford DJ celebrates his 25th anniversary -
book early to avoid disappointment.
CMS Bar
Multi-cultural day 16 August
call 777162 for further information

CMS Bar
Blackbird Leys Community Centre
CMS Catering Services
opening soon
under a brand new chef
with newly renovated kitchen
English food
Caribbean food
Continental food
Wednesday, Friday
and Sunday lunchtimes
CMS Catering Services
call 777162 for further information

Blackbird Leys Looking back

stories
writings
photographs
memories
impressions

We received this leter from John Hall in response to the piece published in the last issue about Mrs McKay.

Dear ***Leys News,***
I would like to complement Mrs McKay on the information she passed onto ***Leys News***, which sparked me to write this. I was born in Littlemore in 1924. I can remember Blackbird Leys as a vast expanse of land where the old methods of sewage disposalwere used. We lads from Littlemore used to roam all over the place, collecting mushrooms and blackberries. Bushy Corpse (on the side of Sandford Brake) was the place for blackberries in the autumn. A Mr Fred Elderfield was a gamekeeper there. I knew the Quartermains and the Hoddinotts. Mr Preston was my father in law, I met his daughter just after the war and we have been married for 56 years this May. My brother and sister told me about the glider coming down at the Brick Kiln as I was away in the navy during the war.

My grandfather was the blacksmith at the forge at the side of Blackbird Leys farmhouse. He did this for 14 years and had between 30 and 40 horses to service and make the steel rims on the cartwheels.

He retired because of an accident just at the time when Oxford City Council was switching to the motor vehicle. The council used to lease out the shooting rights on Blackbird Leys. The eight member shooting syndicate employed a full time gamekeeper to maintain the shoot which continued until after the war.

Your truly,
John Hall
(former pet shop owner now living in Pegasus Road.)

Thankyou for those pieces of information which help to fill in a few gaps in our knowledge.

Anyone else like to contribute news, stories and reminiscences from the past please write or phone us at Leys News.

Oxford Community Education Group workshops

OCEG's aim is to help raise the academic achievements of children of African Caribbean descent through a series of workshops planned for May. Each workshop will include the views of parents and the young people themselves and focus on a different area of the school curriculum.

Workshop 1. Maths, Science, Design and Technology
2 - 5.15pm Friday 23 May. Blackbird Leys Community Centre

Workshop 2. English, Art and Drama
2 - 5.15pm Friday 6 June. Blackbird Leys Community Centre

Workshop 3. History, Geography and Citizenship
2 - 5.15pm Friday 20 June. Blackbird Leys Community Centre

The cost is £35 per participant per workshop

Booking forms are available from Sue Funge on Oxford 776691 or email to sue.funge@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Goodbye to Val and Lyn

Cuddesdon Corner Family Centre is soon to say goodbye to two long serving members of staff. Valerie Smythe is retiring and leaving the centre after 14 years. According to one of her colleagues *"Valerie's been a huge inspiration - she'll be greatly missed."*
Lyn Cook the centre's administrator is also leaving after four years. The centre wishes them all the best and many thanks for all they have done.
Thursday 8 May sees the start of a new computer course at Cuddesdon Corner put on by the Blitz project. People will be designing and making greeting cards, surfing the net and much more. If you're interested in finding out more or want to sign up call them on 773263

Dovecote Voluntary Parent Committee Annual General Meeting

Thursday 22nd May 2003 7pm

Come along and support us to support the needs of our community

The Dovecote Centre
Nightingale Avenue
Blackbird Leys
Oxford OX4 7BU

Telephone Ox 712299
for further information

Supported by
COMMUNITY FUND
LOTTERY FUNDED

Traveller management

A new service to help sort out issues associated with travellers has been set up. The scheme which involves Thames Valley Police and Oxfordshire County Council is essentially a phone line for reporting problems. Inspector Jeff Robinson, who is based at Woodstock Police Station has taken on responsibility along with Sally Willan from the County Council. To get in touch please call 01993 814079 and leave a message if no-one can answer the phone and they will respond. The picture below shows abandoned vehicles on Grenoble Road left by a family of travellers.

Greenfingers by Stuart Mabbutt

Garden Lighting

On many occasions the last feature to be added, lighting can in a twinkling of an eye transform the rest of the garden. As well as making it usable in the evenings, and with the added incentive of being a deterrent to burglars.

Some lighting fittings are designed to be seen day and night. In a prominent place they can light large areas after dark, and can be used as focal points for the duration of the day.

If you prefer not to have the lighting fittings visible during the daylight hours, using shapes and colours that merge in well can solve this issue. Lights come in many differing forms. From mushroom types to recessed lights. Japanese and Chinese lanterns to candles. So you can always find something for every preference.

When positioning lights, remember they should assist your guests who don't necessarily know where the best routes around your garden are. Well-placed lights on your drive and in the vicinity of the front door can be welcoming as well as improving the architectural look of your house. A good rule to follow when lighting paths is to place lights just above ground level, whereas trees look better "Up-lit" from sunken fittings placed in the ground.

Remember too, never to overlight a garden, especially a small one as the effect looks too similar to how it looks during the day. But also keep in mind that too few lights can be just as undesirable. By having one or two lights in the distance can make the garden distinctly uninviting, as there are large dark voids in the foreground.

Having just a few lights around your patio area, so lighting the foreground and leaving an expanse of darkness beyond, can also make using the patio an unnerving experience, so be attentive to this consideration and plan your lighting carefully and diligently. Coloured lights are also useful. Green and yellow are mysterious, but can become unflattering when shining on the skin. Red lights produce a warm glow, but on the warmer summer evenings, white or blue lights may have a more cooling effect especially when combined with the sound of running water.

Above all, when scrutinising and installing lighting and electricity supplies in your garden, always use a reputable electrician. But if you plan to go to the exertion of doing the installation work yourself, ensure the fittings you plan to use are designed for the purpose you are using them for.

Garden tips for May and June

Thinning and planting are important during May, from seeds sown during the previous month. Its essential to the health of seedlings, before they get overcrowded and entwine their roots around each other, as they compete for what limited space that there is. Also during May, the early spring flowers like Wallflowers, Bellis Daisies and Forget-Me-Nots can be replaced with summer bedding as the threat of frost should have subsided.

During June, if you are planting out any young cabbages, or any other Brassica for that matter. You are well advised to puddle them in as you plant. Puddling is an old practice when planting out whilst its hot. Just make up a thick mixture of clay soil and water, and dip the roots of each plant into it. It will help retain moisture while the plant settles in.

Gillians Park needs you

Anyone interested in contributing ideas, design or practical gardening to the community garden in Gillians Park? Please ring Sue Weinstock on 776379.

Creche gets new worker

Oxford Mobile Creche has recently recruited Jo Richardson as project worker. OMC is a small Blackbird Leys based business providing work opportunities for local people. It is looking for volunteer directors to bring their business expertise to this worthwhile project. If you would like to support this exciting initiative then please phone Debbie on 777751.

Goodbye old oak

The oak tree that stood outside the Barn looking up Nightingale Avenue was found to be diseased and hollow. The tree was swiftly removed following the discovery. and with it goes another piece of Leys history.

Oxford Women's Training Scheme has been established for 14 years as a training and development agency which offers women the opportunity to learn new skills and gain confidence in a friendly environment.

oxford womens TRAINING SCHEME

OWTS

We offer free IT and Construction skills courses for women.
There is a free on-site creche and we pay travel and childcare expenses.
Places available starting April 2003.

Computing Courses:
Skills Check - literacy, numeracy, basic computing
Absolute Beginners Computing
Upskills - database and spreadsheets
Supporting Users of IT - NVQ3
New Media - Website Design
Video with Computing - video production and editing

Construction Courses:
Building Skills for Women
Decorative Occupations - NVQ1-2, FCA, ICA
Wood Occupations - NVQ1-2, ICA
Multiskills - NVQ2

For more information contact OWTS on:
Tel: 01865 741317
Fax: 01865 742199
E-mail: women@owts.org.uk
Or visit our website at: www.owts.org.uk
OWTS Northway Centre, Maltfield Road, Oxford OX3 9RG

Funded by the European Social Fund, Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, the Learning and Skills Council and the Home Office.

Improve your English and Maths

English
Filling in forms
Writing letters
Applying for jobs
Spelling
Reading

Basic Computing
Typing a letter
Using the Internet
Using e-mail

Maths
Handling money
Measuring and weighing
Maths for work or study

You can study:
- Part-time in small, friendly groups
- In classes that are about 2 hrs long Day - time or evening
- For Basic Skills certificates in English & Maths
- Choose how many classes you want to do

All classes are FREE

If you would like to find out more Please ring 01865 269269

OXFORD COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION

Blackbird Leys Parish Council

Colin Minto, chairperson of Blackbird Leys Parish Council responds to a letter published in April's issue of Leys News about the availability of the council accounts.

Dear readers,

I would like to take this opportunity to respond to the constructive feedback from a concerned resident, published in the last issue of Leys News.

Could I first of all thank you for your contact, because in order to serve the community it is essential that we receive your views.

With regard to your particular concerns, I can confirm that a request to the above address, is the most effective method for requesting a copy of the Parish Council accounts.

On the subject of what the Parish Council does and where your money is spent, could I urge you to attend the Parish Council meetings, held on the first Tuesday of each month, at 7.30pm at the Leys Linx Centre at the Community Centre, or visit our website www.blackbirdleys.co.uk

It is here you will find out the answers to your questions and have an active involvement in influencing where the money is spent and what action the Parish Council takes.

This is how I started my relationship with the Parish Council and indeed my fellow councillors. I attended one meeting to understand what was being done about the parking for the stadium. I was warmly welcomed and extremely impressed with the knowledge and passion shared at the meeting and decided that I too would like to offer my spare time and support to the community.

As councillors we have a vested interest in all residents of the Leys, so please write, phone, email or meet us and tell us what could be better in your community. We are all volunteers and concerned residents ourselves and together we can make a difference.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully.
Colin Minto

Spring clean up starts here

The 2003 Oxford spring clean campaign will kick off in Blackbird Leys on Friday 16 May.
The new Lord Mayor and local councillor Pat Stannard will officially launch the campaign.
The Parish Council is at the forefront of the campaign to encourage local people to take part in a mass clean up. Local schools are being asked to participate in the community cleanup on Saturday 17 and Sunday 18 May.
Oxford City Council and the City Works team are behind the campaign.
If any residents have problems with dumped rubbish or litter please contact either the Parish office on 734346, the cleansing department at City Works on 725912 or Blackbird Leys Housing office on 467222.

Knights Road toilets
The re-opening of the toilets in Knights road has been delayed because of funding, which will set back the re-opening until June or July.

What else your parish council does

The Parish Council has also been actively involved with the City and County Councils to enable the parking restraints around the Kassam Stadium to be carried out.

Work closely with the Cleansing Department to remove illegally dumped rubbish.

Contact the vehicle removal officer to get dumped cars removed.

Keep an eye on condition of the streams and brooks that run through the estate.

Set up a parish council website to enable residents to access information easier www.blackbirdleys.co.uk

Give out small annual grants to local community organisations.

MONDAY DROP IN AND LEYS LUNCH CLUBS

The Monday drop in club continues to run at the Clockhouse, run entirely by volunteers, since the Shaw Trust withdrew the catering service from the Barn. Although it means the loss of a hot meal, volunteers have been using their initiative to seek out alternative arrangements and have been using the Clockhouse kitchen to prepare food. The Spar shop has helped out too.

The Leys Lunch Club has also had to deal with the blow of the withdrawal of the Shaw Trust from the Barn. The club will meet again when something definite can be confirmed. Signs are looking promising for a relaunch soon. Members are encouraged to get in touch to add support to the venture. Contact Roy Simmonds on 718634.

The Lunch Club will continue to arrange trips. On Saturday 5 April the club went on a successful trip to Wellsbourne Market for members of both clubs.

PATHWAY WORKSHOP

Reg Charity No 1014416
providing paid employment for adults with disabilities
PRODUCTS MADE FROM SELECTED RECLAIMED TIMBER

FREE DELIVERY OVER £50
20 mile radius
of the workshop

- PARK BENCHES
- PICNIC BENCHES
- TRELLIS ARCHES
- BIRD TABLES
- TUBS & TROUGHS
- NEST BOXES
- COMPOST BINS

FULL DISPLAYS AT

Templars Square, Cowley

12 th - 18th May

Milton Keynes Flower Show

3rd - 5th May

5% Discount to all Bonanza Members
(on production of their card)
Visitors welcome at our Workshop
(off Windale Avenue), Blackbird Leys, Oxford
Tel: 01865 714111 (for brochure and price list)

Blackbird Bonanza

In March the Blackbird Bonanza celebrated it's fifth birthday. In the five years we have been going we have given back to Blackbird Leys over £161,000 in prize money!

..We have also given back to the estate over £3,000 to local organisations including The Guides, The Scouts, Blackbird Leys Football Team and Shepherds Hill Pre-school. Don't forget your money also supports a local charity, the Pathway Workshop. **So for just £1 a week not only do you have the chance to win £500, but you are also supporting worthwhile local organisations that need your help.** Recent winners have come from Field Avenue, Blacksmiths Meadow, Evenlode Tower, Peregrin Road, and Firs Meadow.

If you would like to join please contact the co-ordinator on Oxford 423023 or The Pathway Workshop on 714111 for further details.

News News

From April the Blackbird Bonanza is lowering the **age limit from 18 to 16** in line with the National Lottery. 16's or over wishing to join the Blackbird Bonanza please contact a collector or ring the co-ordinator on the above number.

On Friday 28th March, The 35th Oxford Scout Group received a cheque for £300 from the Blackbird Bonanza Estate Kitty. The Beaver Scout Leader wrote to The Bonanza and asked to be nominated in the half yearly draw, as their roof in Sandy Lane Headquarters is in need of repair and they have been quoted £5,000. We hope this amount will help them on their way. Good Luck with the rest of the fundraising!

As always, the Blackbird Bonanza is in need of new collectors, you can earn a **generous weekly commission**, as well as **weekly and half yearly bonuses.** If you are over the age of 18 and are interested in earning some extra money for approximately 3 hours a week please contact the co-ordinator on Oxford 423023.

Pathway Workshop, Dunnock Way, Blackbird Leys, Oxford OX4 7EX (Next To The Spar Shop)

Gardening

There will be a course for all you budding gardeners soon. Get enthused! Get confident! Whether you want to be involved in the community garden which the Leys Residents Association are taking the lead in, or simply want to make the most of your own, this course is for you. It will cover garden design, choosing and nurturing plants, garden features and basic skills for gardeners.

Health

This course could help you change your own attitudes and behaviour, towards your health and the health of the community. Learn in an informal setting, with the focus on the interests of the group. ***Starting 7th May, meeting every Wednesday for 8 weeks. Free, with childcare expenses paid.***

Participatory learning

Several of our courses (including Focus on Health, Understanding our Children & Facilitation Skills) use this approach. It is informal and based on the interests of and issues raised by the group. Time is spent reflecting on, discussing, sharing and exploring our experience and looking at ways that we can create change. Participants move forward and take action, building friendships and gaining knowledge in the process. These courses are ideal for those taking their first steps towards getting involved in activities or training, as well as people with lots of experience.

Understanding Children

A chance for parents, whether of toddlers or teenagers, to get together in an informal group and explore the issues involved in being a parent in todays world. Discuss networks and opportunities, school and outside, isolation, growing up and growing pains. Gain a better understanding of the behaviour and needs of our children. Consider the impact that society has on our experience of parenting. Give and receive support whilst learning together. ***Starting after half-term with crèche provided.***

Leys Community Learning Project

- Free learning opportunities for residents of the Leys
- Supporting participants in community activities
- For information or to book a place ring Maria & Emma on 396755

Crèche work

Oxford Mobile Crèche are now in a position to offer opportunities for residents to train and gain experience in childminding and crèche work. There is a definite need for crèche facilities on the Leys and this crèche (based in the Dovecote) has been working to meet it. The job is great if you are a parent, but would suit anyone who enjoys being with children and is looking for a career that will always be in demand. Come to the **Learning fair** to find out what is involved, what training is on offer and how much your skills in looking after children can change your life.

I.T and Multi-media

The Learning fair will include tasters and drop in sessions about all kinds of technology, video and digital photography, using computers for home or work, internet, e-mail and music. See what technology can offer you!

Learning fair

A day of activities will take place in the summer at the Farmstead buildings (Clockhouse, Dovecote and Barn). It will help you to find out about all the opportunities for learning, and activities in the Leys.

You will find lots of short "tasters" to sample. Courses range from those aimed at giving you skills and confidence to take into a work environment, to fun activities to pamper yourself and cheer youself up. And they're free.

Because it's often hard when you have family responsibilities there will be a crèche on site, and plenty to keep children busy.

Local groups will tell you what they are up to, so that you have a chance to get involved.

With food, music and games it should be well worth heading over to this fun **Learning fair**.

Check the next issue of Leys News (due out in July) for details.

A partnership between Leys Linx and Ruskin College, funded by the Learning Skills Council

Leys Linx

News from your local regeneration scheme

"Nothing ever happens, so why bother?"

Leys Linx has been out in the streets recently asking people what needs doing on the estate and what they think of local services. Some are reluctant to share their views because they think that nothing will happen. But things can!

After years of lobbying and campaigning by local people there is going to be a new state-of-the-art health centre. This will improve local peoples quality of life. Drugs are a major concern on the estate and the involvement of local people in the **Leys Tackling Drugs Project** has resulted in a substantial grant (***see right.***) This start would never have happened unless they had got involved.

There are so many community projects and services on the estate which we can already be proud of, and lots of new things are taking off. So sometimes saying what we want to see is not a waste of time!

£30,000 to tackle drugs on Leys

Announced at April conference in Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre.

A team of local people presented their findings, having talked to around 250 residents about their perspective on the drug problem and what needs to be done to improve services on the estate. Pat Peters (Thames Valley Police Drugs Co-ordinator) said, on behalf of the Oxfordshire Drugs Action and Alcohol Team, that the £30,000 will take forward the good work of the **Leys Tackling Drugs Project**, now that priorities have been identified. Key will be setting up community-based drug related projects on the Leys and working closely with the major agencies in this field. ***If you would like to be involved in implementing the*** **Leys Community Action Plan on Drugs** ***please contact 396392.***

blackbirdleys.com

Blackbird Leys /Greater Leys now has its own website. See p3

Local market

People would like a market on the estate (everyone we spoke to at the last Leys Fair thought it was a good idea) - so we are planning to make it happen. It would sell fruit and vegetables and local produce, be an outlet for local arts and crafts and allow community groups here to promote their activities. This could really bring the community together. A local market is now a regular event in East Oxford and we hope to learn how they went about it.

If you would like to be involved contact Enid Foster on 402070.

Do you know that 9 out of 10 families with children are entitled to Child Tax Credit?

More money in your pocket?

Find out about the new *tax credits* at the Leys Linx Centre - or apply online at BLITZ

In April we ran an awareness day about the new Tax Credits and also the wide range of childcare facilities on the estate. Advisors were on hand to answer questions and could tell people their exact entitlements on the spot.

If you couldn't get to this event, come to the Leys Linx Centre now, or ring Sue / Enid on 402070 or Sasha / Mike on 714492

At the centre

Don't forget the **Pension Advisory Service drop-in session** at the Leys Linx Centre, fortnightly on Mondays from 9.30 -12.30, for pension age customers or those approaching retirement.

Housing Rights offers independent housing advice fortnightly on Fridays 2.30 - 4pm.

Recently we put a yellow leaflet through everyones door, giving information about what happens when at the Centre.

If you didn't get one or you want to know more either drop in or phone Enid on 402070

Leys Linx is supported by the Government's Single Regeneration Budget

SPAR

OPEN EVERY DAY
from 7am to 10pm

Most of your needs in one store

Leys SPAR Ltd * Dunnock Way * Blackbird Leys * Oxford * OX4 7EX

Your elected representatives

● Member of Parliament

Oxford East

Andrew Smith - Labour
4 Flaxfield Rd Oxford OX4 6QD
772893
Surgeries held first Friday each month at
Barton Neighborhood Centre 3 - 3.45
Princes St 4.15 - 5.30
Rose Hill Community Centre 6 - 7
Third Friday each month rolling surgery
around the constituency, including Blackbird Leys.
Please call for precise times and locations.

Andrew Smith

Val Smith

● City councillors

Blackbird Leys ward

Cllr Val Smith - Labour
4 Flaxfield Rd Oxford OX4 6QD
772893
mobile 07767 446051

Pat Stannard

Cllr Pat Stannard - Labour
31 Green Hill OX4 7UD
777433
and for the coming year Lord Mayor

Northfield Brook ward

Cllr Molly Florey - Labour
122 Sandy Lane Oxford OX4 6AS
712620

Molly Florey

Cllr Stuart Craft
Independent Working Class Association
07733 274324
stuart@bliwca.fsnet.co.uk

Stuart Craft

● County councillor

Blackbird Leys ward

Cllr Barbara Gatehouse - Labour
33 Salford Rd Oxford OX3 ORY
240424

Barbara Gatehouse

The three Labour councillors hold surgeries at the Leisure Centre on Saturdays from 11 - 12 noon. To find out who will be there please ring them on the numbers above.

Stuart Craft the IWCA councillor for Northfield Brook is negotiating with the Leys Residents Association to hold regular Wednesday evening surgeries at 26 Kingfisher Green. Contact him directly for more information.

Useful local numbers

Services

Abandoned vehicles If on public land call 252942

Asian Women's helpline 0800 0526077

Bulk rubbish collection 725912

Dialability (Disability helpline) 763600.

Dog nuisance - call the dog warden on 252914. Out of hours 240924.

Fridges/freezers free collection 252936

Garden refuse Green waste sacks 50p each. Call 725912. Better still compost your own.

Junk mail - to stop receiving unsolicited mail write to FREEPOST 22, London W1E. Free service

Noise pollution 252556

Pavement hazards (eg uneven surfaces) 747390

Pest control 252384

Pollution in streams and rivers call 0800 807060

Street lighting to report faulty lights call freephone 0800 317802

Syringe collection 249811

Trading standards 815000

Traveller management services 01993 814079

Local organisations

Accan (African-Caribbean Community Action Network) 467050

Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground 747704

Agnes Smith Advice Centre 770206

Blackbird Leys Community Centre bookings 435954 centre manager 401098

Blackbird Leys Library 770403

Blackbird Leys Youth Centre 772886

Blackbird Leys Credit Union 773098

CMS Bar Community Centre 777162

First Blackbird Leys Brownies 770959

First Blackbird Leys Rainbow Guides 396553

Leys Community Development Initiative 395927

Leys Linx office 396392

Leys Linx centre 402070

Oasis drop in centre for women who have experienced mental health problems. Open Mondays 5-9 and Fridays 11-3 off Cowley Road. 721472

Oxford Community Mediation 776789

Blackbird Leys Parish Council 734346 www.blackbirdleys.co.uk

Education

Able Adult basic skills centre 776334

Community Education East and South Oxford 712094

Oxford College FE Leys campus 245871

Sports

Afya - women's sports and fitness - 396392

Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre 467020

Blackbird Leys Swimming Pool 467040

Peers Sports Centre 467095

Health

Doctors surgery 778244

Blackbird Leys Health Centre 778244

Health visitors 715689

Under 8's

Cuddesdon Corner Family Centre 773263

Dovecote Under 8's building 712299

Homestart (home visiting scheme for under 5's) 779991

The PEEP Centre (Peers Early Education Partnership) 395145

Shepherds Hill PreSchool 779504

Housing

Ealing Family Housing Association
Elaine Partridge/Rhiannon Jones 712244 FAX 712121
The Farmhouse opening times Mon - Fri 9 - 1 and 2 - 5 except Fri 2 - 4

Oxford Citizens Housing Association
All calls through customer services 773000
Farmhouse office Mark Kimber / Elizabeth Naluwooza / Aida Tomolso open as per Ealing Family (above).

Cherwell Housing Trust
Customer Services 260555

Northcote Housing Association 712244

Leys Residents Association
Open to all residents in the new part of Blackbird Leys.
Contact via 26 Kingfisher Green 749876
lra1@hotmail.com

Blackbird Leys Local Services Shop
3 Cuddesdon Way
Mon - Thurs 9 to 5
Fri 9 to 4.30 467222

Oxford Housing Rights free and confidential advice 247853

Police

999 - In an emergency or if you see a crime being or about to be committed.

Community beat officers Sergeant Steve Redding.

Community Beat Office and answer machine. For non urgent matters, advice and information. 335138

Police Customer Services To report incidents that do not need police attendance call 266333

Oxford Control Room To report crime that requires the police 266000

Cowley Police Station 749909

Family Protection Unit 335200

Crimestoppers freephone 0800 555111

Fire

Oxfordshire Fire Service helpline 719900

What's on weekly

Age Concern resource desk at the Clockhouse. Regular computer sessions for the over 50's. Info on 717614

Area Youth Club Wednesday 7-9pm the Barn

Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground After School Club Monday to Friday 3 - 5.15pm

Brownies Thursday 6 - 7.30pm Holy Family Church Hall (for 7 to 11 age group)

Carer and toddler group Thursday 9.15 - 11am and Friday 1-3pm at the Dovecote £1

Dovecote After School Club Monday to Thursday 3.15 - 4.45pm

Dovecote Saturday Club 10 - 1pm

Drop in club Monday 10-1.30pm at the Clockhouse £2 + 50p membership

The Edge - Youth Club BBL Community Centre. Wednesday 1 - 4.30pm drop in 7.30 - 9.30pm club

Family Nurturing Network Tuesday 9 - 1.30pm The Clockhouse

Guides Friday 7 - 9pm at the Holy Family Church. Girls 10 - 15 years. Info on 455970.

Home Start First Babies. Dovecote Friday 10.30 - 12noon

Karate Kids Tuesday 6-7pm and Thursday 5.45 - 6.45pm at the Barn

New parents group 10.30 - 11.30am Friday at the Dovecote

Peep groups on the Leys. See page 7 for full listing

Self defence 6 - 9pm Tuesday at the Barn

Snak Mondays 10.30 - 1pm at the Dovecote. Hot food, drinks and more.

Weight watchers 7 - 8pm Thursday at the Barn

What do Area Committees do?

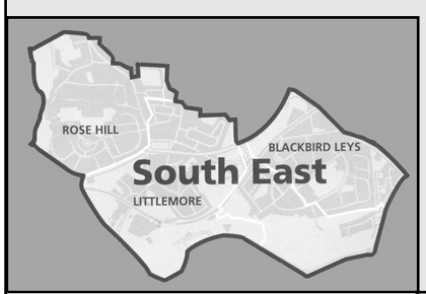
OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

The six Area Committees are responsible for the following:

- abandoned vehicles
- allotments
- car parks
- cemeteries
- community centres
- decisions on planning applications
- ditches and streams
- dog wardens
- parks and countryside management
- public toilets
- street cleaning
- street naming

South East Area Committee meetings

Ring 252249 for further information



Tuesday 6th May
6.30pm - 9.30pm
Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre Pegasus Road

Monday 2nd June
6.30pm - 9.30pm
Rose Hill Community Centre The Oval

Monday 7th July
6.30pm - 9.30pm
Venue to be confirmed

Leys News Ltd. acknowledges financial assistance from:
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Oxford Citizens Housing Association
Oxfordshire Community Foundation
and support in kind from:
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and Business Boffins Ltd.

AFYA launched

Afya the new project that promotes women taking part in sport and fitness related activities was formally launched on Sunday 9 March at Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre.
A cheque for £89,000 was presented to the project by Penny Kurowski from Sport England. The launch was an opportunity for many local women, particularly from the black and Asian communities, to try out different sports. Women are encouraged to get in touch with Afya c/o Leys Linx in Blackbird Leys Community Centre or to call 396392 to find out what's on offer.

Ease into exercise

These sessions run by experienced instructor Val Kir are continuing at the Barn on Thursday mornings for an hour from 10.30 to 11.30. The sessions are supported by Age Concern Oxfordshire.

Leisure Centre fitness classes

Monday
10-11am Step & Tone 6-7pm Aerotone

Tuesday
10-11am Aerotone 6-7pmTae Kwon Do

Wednesday
6-7pm Legs, Bums & Tums

Thursday
10-11am Step & Tone 6-7pm Tae Kwon Do

Friday
10-11am Legs, Bums & Tums
7-8pm Boxing circuits

Call 467020 to find out more about these and other activities at the Leisure Centre, including hiring the snooker table, booking the creche, summer and other playscheme news and the cost of hiring any area within the centre.

BLACKBIRDS FIRING IN: action shot from an under 8's match earlier in the season

Oxford Blues - roller hockey takes off

Skater hockey is an exciting sport that combines skating skills, stick handling and team work. It appeals to many , initially because of the cool looking kit that has to be worn and its resemblance to ice hockey. The Oxford Blues skater hockey club are taking the lead in promoting the sport in the region. Some of the youth and junior training sessions are at Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre. To find out more about the Oxford Blues visit www.oxskate.com or call development officer Sue Edwards on 767282.

Oxford City Council also run the 'street sports' programme during school holidays and the summer evenings. The skater hockey sessions are run by Aldie Chalmers (The Oxford Blues Coach) and are often attended by other experienced players.
Various outdoor sites around Oxford are used including the Fry's Hill Sports site (pictured above).Sticks, helmets (and some skates) are provided, although own skates are recommended. Knee pads and gloves are recommended, but full kit is not required. The sessions are free and a brilliant way to get into the sport.
Although it is officially for 8-18 year olds, grown ups often join in as well - to help out. Just turn up and play.
For further information, contact the Oxford City Council sports development officer on 252327.

Tel: 779273 NASH'S BAKERY The Top Shops

New at Nash's
Freshly Ground Italian Coffees

Cappuccino
Espresso
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Freshly Brewed Tea

Always available:
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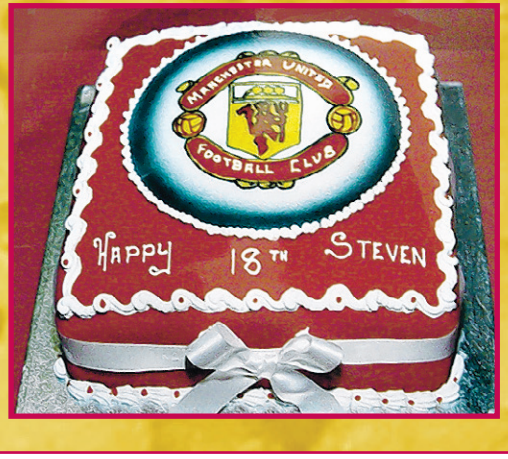
Dont forget fresh dairy cream cakes for the staff birthday party